

We believe discipleship is a direction
not a destination.



Prayer: Does it Make a Difference

Week 2

Course Outline

- ~~Keeping Company with God~~
 - ~~Week 1 Introduction, Ch1-2~~
 - ~~What do you expect~~
 - ~~Who prays and why~~
 - **Week 2 Ch 3-5**
 - Come just as we are
 - Who is God to listen



Course Outline

- **Unraveling the Mysteries**
 - **Week 3 Ch 6-8**
 - What's the point
 - Wrestling with God
 - **Week 4 Ch 9-11**
 - Does prayer change God?
 - Ask, Seek, Knock



Course Outline

- **The Language of Prayer**
 - **Week 5 Ch 12-13**
 - I pray all the time, but...
 - It takes time and practice
 - **Week 6 Ch 14-15**
 - What do I say?
 - When we don't hear anything



Course Outline

- **Prayer Dilemmas**
 - **Week 7 Ch 16-17**
 - Unanswered prayer, whose fault is it
 - Living with not knowing
 - **Week 8 Ch 18-19**
 - Prayer and healing
 - What to pray for if not healing



Course Outline

- **The Practice of Prayer**
 - **Week 9 Ch 20-22**
 - How do I pray?
 - Should I “forward this prayer”
 - Rule #1 Love the Lord your God
 - **Week 10 Review, Conclusions**



Keeping Company With God

Just As We Are

Chapter 3



The prayer preceding all prayers is
“May it be the real I who speaks.
May it be the real Thou that I
speak to.”

C. S. LEWIS



Keeping it Real

- Who is the real you?
 - The you at Work, Church, Friends, Home?
 - The you in your head?
 - Do you have that voice that says:
 - Don't say that you'll get in trouble
 - Don't say that they'll think you're weird
 - That's not normal



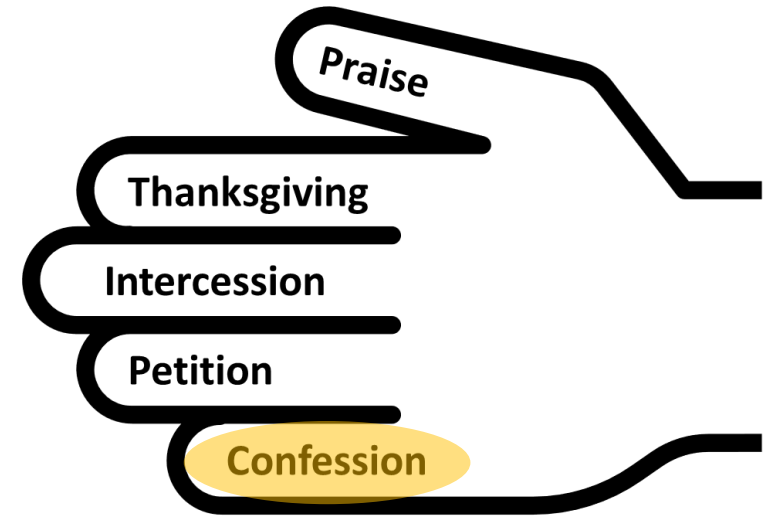
Keeping it Real

- When you pray do pray from the real you?
 - Or do you have a “God you” you present?
- How should we approach God when we pray?
 - The following are some attitudes we should embrace
 - Guilty
 - Helpless
 - Humble
 - Doubting
 - Honest
 - Exposed



-Guilty-

- Remember the hand from last week?
 - We are called to confess our sins
 - Some find this easy
 - Ready to seek forgiveness and healing
 - Others find confession painful
- What makes confession necessary?



Confession

- Confession is not meant to make you feel miserable
 - It is a resetting of our attitude
 - We are not the one in charge
 - We did not create the rules
 - God did
 - Through confession we restore the true state of things
 - God as the creator and us as the created



God Already Knows

- “God already knows who we are; we are the ones who must find a way to come to terms with our true selves.”
 - God knows our sins and faults
 - Confession makes us acknowledge these sins/faults
- Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my concerns.
See if there is any offensive way in me;
lead me in the everlasting way. Psalm 139:23–24



-Helpless-

- I don't need help I can do it on my own
 - This is an attitude we encourage for good reason
 - But it is a huge stumbling block at times with God
 - I don't need your help I can do it
 - I'll fix my sin problem on my own
- We need to acknowledge our weakness, our helplessness
 - And look to God for help daily



-Humble-

- God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.
James 4:6
- What does humility look like?
 - Someone who knows the truth about who they are
 - And what brought them there
- God gave us the abilities/circumstances to be who we are
 - We need to acknowledge, humbly, that God is in control



-Doubting-

- Is doubting God a sin?
 - I do not think so
 - Over and over we see people, in the Bible, question God
 - Why did you...
 - I don't understand, It doesn't make sense?!
- We are allowed to doubt, just talk to God about it

Doubting

- “Prayer allows a place for me to bring my doubts and complaints — in sum, my ignorance — and subject them to the blinding light of a reality I cannot comprehend but can haltingly learn to trust.”



-Honest-

- When we pray, we must be honest
 - Don't show God the person you think you should be
 - Show Him the person you are
 - Say the things that you only say to yourself
 - Say the things you are scared to admit to yourself



Honest

- “We must lay before Him what is in us, not what ought to be in us,” C. S. Lewis.
- “To put it another way, we must trust God with what God already knows.”



-Exposed-

- This extends being honest to not hiding
 - Stand before God with your sins laid out
 - Your true motivations for helping at...
 - God already knows your motivations, your sins
 - And He still loves you
- Show your “true self” to God
 - The parts you don’t like to look at



Keeping Company With God

The God Who Is

Chapter 4



I Did My Part

- Many religions have rituals in prayer
 - Lighting candles, spinning prayer wheels
 - Paying for priest to send prayers into heaven
- When you pray is it any different?
 - Is it a task you check off your list?
 - I sent my prayer to God, now we wait for His response, I did my part
 - Now it's God's turn to do His job



-Afterimages-

- We often see people in their roles
 - Clerk, Software Support guy, Haircut Lady
- Who do you see when you pray?
 - The grandfather God?
 - The vengeful father God?
 - The police God?
 - The disappointed God?



-A Vast Difference-

- Think of your friends, what do these relationships look like?
 - We have similarities and differences
 - They LOVE guns and shooting, I could care less
 - I love a good game night, they, why waste the time
 - We are still friends and enjoy each others company
- Why are we still friends?



A Vast Difference

- Now, what about the vast differences between God and us?
 - What do we have in common to talk about?
 - The Bible compares us as subject and King, slave and Master. What is there to talk about?
 - But also, bride and Groom, child and Parent
- Jesus is the one who shows how to pray, to talk to God
 - As child to a father with that sense of closeness
- God chooses to spend time with each of us despite the differences



-Unpredictable Presence-

- One big hindrance to prayer is our invisible God
 - It is hard to talk to someone when they are not there in front of you
- But is this true?
 - God is always there, He always hears us
 - We just may not “feel” Him
 - Why is that?



Unpredictable Presence

- When we pray are we calling God to us?
 - I'm ready to talk now God
 - Or is God always there and we just don't recognize Him?



-Hearing God-

- Why is it so hard to “hear/feel” God?
- Why do we feel the presence of God more in trials
 - We tend to quit worrying, quit focusing on all the other things in life
 - Or minds are clear for the first time, or at least less crowded
 - And focused on God



Hearing God

- We don't need to talk more to hear God
 - But talk less
 - Be quiet more



Keeping Company With God

Coming Together

Chapter 5



Problems

- The main purpose of prayer is not to make life easier, nor to gain magical powers, but to know God
- I need God more than anything I might get from God
- Yet when I seek to know God through prayer
 - Problems rear up
 - God doesn't talk back



Problems

- God doesn't talk back
- Why praise God who, unlike friends, does not need a lift?
- Why inform God of needs that God already knows about?
- Why thank God, who hardly needs a pat on the back?



Who Needs Prayer?

- We should pray not because God needs it, but because we need it
 - Thoughts?



Answers?

- When we praise him
 - We remind ourselves of what is fundamentally important
- When we thank him
 - We remember our utter dependence on his care
- When we pray for people
 - We are encouraged to go out and do something to help them



But?

- From this perspective prayer is a self-help exercise
 - These are all good things but
 - They are all one sided
 - Where is God in our prayer?
- So why pray?
- Why is it important to God?



-Why Jesus Prayed-

- Let's look at Jesus
 - Was Jesus' prayer life different than mine?
 - Well yes, he is Jesus and I am not
 - With that said no
- Did God ever respond to Jesus verbally while praying?
 - No
- Yet Jesus prayed



You Know

- Jesus said, “your Father knows the things you need before you ask him.” Matthew 6:8
 - Yet Jesus still prayed
- We do not need to tell God what he doesn't know
 - God cares about the things we pray about
 - God is waiting for us to care about them with Him



-Friendship-

- Let's return to friendship
- What do you talk about with your friends?
 - You talk about life, sports, weather, Family, Dreams
- Where do you talk to your friends
 - On the golf course, at the salon,...
- Are all your friends the same?
- Do you talk with them about the same things?



I Call You Friend

- I do not call you servants anymore, because a servant doesn't know what his master, is doing. I have called you **friends**, because I have made known to you everything I have heard from my Father. John 15:15
- God calls us his friends
 - What does that mean?!



I Can Bring to God

- I can bring to God
 - My failures, success, sins, joys
- God cares about our ordinary everyday life
 - Our pains and sorrows
- And like all friendships it takes work and communication
 - We must talk to God
 - Often!



-Running Dialogue-

- Have you ever been apart from your spouse for an extended period?
 - What did you talk about each night over the phone?
 - What did the kids do, what you ate, the local weather, a stiff neck
 - We discussed our day
 - Why?

Running Dialogue

- This is prayer!!!
 - God this is what's happening today
 - This is what I'm thinking about
 - This is what I saw
- I forgot to add the big thing I talked to my wife about
 - All the problems and jerks I met that day!
- God wants to hear that stuff too!!!



The Rub

- When I talk to my wife on the phone
 - She laughs, commiserates, and says your right
 - I have yet to hear this from God
 - At least not verbally
- The truth is the closer you draw to God the more you hear Him
 - But you just said you never hear Him



The Spirit

- Much like my wife the Spirit tells me when I am being dumb
 - “He cut me off!” I want revenge!
 - The Spirit says forgive
 - “I’ll give em a piece of my mind!” When I don’t get my way
 - The Spirit says think of others and their needs
- This is not me talking
 - This is the Spirit, the Father speaking in me



-Passionate Alliance-

- Did you know we are Gods allies?
 - A much weaker, maybe a little sad looking ally
 - But God has called us to do kingdom work on earth
- And when you have a team what happens?
 - There will be disagreements
 - And if the people are passionate
 - Those disagreements will be passionate



Did You Know

- You can disagree with God
 - You will be wrong, but you can do it
 - And you should voice your disagreements with God loudly
 - Just look at the Bible
 - Psalms, Job, Lamentation!
 - People loudly complaining about how things are or aren't



Ritual Lament

- This is my new favorite churchy phrase
 - Ritual Lament aka:
 - “Bitching”, “Complaining”, “Whining”
- According to Deborah Tannen’s book *You Just Don’t Understand*
 - This is the way many women bound
 - This is how they face the harshness of life
 - Especially the things they can not change



Passionate Alliance

- Based on some of the prayers in the Bible I have the freedom to
 - Complain about how this world is running
 - I see evil prospering
 - Good things happen to bad people
 - Bad things happen to good people
 - Bring these things to God
 - Tell Him what is wrong, complain about it



Summary

- Prayer is not about
 - Checking an obligation off your task list
 - Bringing your list of needs to God
- Prayer is about
 - Creating a relationship with God
 - Spending time with a friend
 - Expressing your complaints, frustrations
 - And listening



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